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INFO RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA 3370
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 6729
RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ MAY QUITO 0321
RHMFIUU/DEPT OF STATE AIR WING PATRICK AFB FL
RHEHOND/DIRONDCP WASHDC
RHMFIUU/COGARD INTELCOORDCEN WASHINGTON DC
RULSJGA/COMDT COGARD WASHINGTON DC//G-CI/G-M/G-OLE//
RUCOWCA/COMLANTAREA COGARD PORTSMOUTH VA
RUWDQAA/COMPACAREA COGARD ALAMEDA CA

UNCLAS LIMA 001811

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STATE FOR INL/LP
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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: NAS APRIL 2006 MONTHLY CABLE

REF: LIMA 01460

SUMMARY

¶1. (SBU) The key developments in April 2006:

** As of April 27, CORAH eradicated 3,027 hectares and eliminated 8,262 square meters of seedbeds.

** Three improvised explosive devices (IED) exploded over two days in coca fields. No eradicators were seriously injured.

** Police destroyed 38.5 hectares of opium poppy. DIRANDRO also destroyed 110 cocaine-base laboratories and a major cocaine HCl laboratory in the VRAE.

** DIRAVPOL has offered NAS a second, heavy-lift MI-17 helicopter for eradication and interdiction operations.

** The seizure 65 kg of cocaine HCl in the Bahamas points to Peru.

** New ion-scanner led to the arrests of 40 people and 100 kg of cocaine HCl at Lima airport. Also, the newly trained canines at Lima airport found 52 kg of cocaine HCl.

** NAS attendance at drug prevention conference in Charleston, SC yields new strategies for encouraging more local participation in community coalitions. End Summary.

ERADICATION CONTINUES DESPITE ELECTIONS AND EXPLOSIVES

¶2. (U) CORAH has eradicated 3,027 hectares and eliminated 8,262 square meters of seedbeds in the first four months of ¶2006. CORAH will remain in San Martin until the end of May, and then move to the Aguaytia area where there are an estimated 3,500 hectares of coca.

¶3. (SBU) Three improvised explosive devices (IED) detonated near eradicators pulling up coca plants in the Santa Rosa de Mishollo, the home of cocalero leader and newly-elected congresswoman Nancy Obregon. No one was seriously injured. The explosions occurred on April 26 when an eradicator tossed

his "cococho" (extraction tool) a few meters ahead of him because he was pulling coca by hand. Earlier that morning, a bomb dog checked the field that morning but did not find the IED. The next day, three more eradicators were injured when two more IEDs exploded in the same field about five minutes apart. Both IEDs were triggered when the coca plants they were attached to were uprooted. Two eradicators came away with bruises. The other had dirt sprayed in his face. NAS is assisting DIRANDRO to develop field sweeping tactics to detect IEDs.

¶4. (U) The 2005 UN Coca Survey results will be officially presented in June. NAS and USAID are now discussing with DEVIDA an eradication campaign in nature preserves and ways to discourage replanting.

UPDATE ON OPIUM STRATEGY

¶5. (U) Efforts to stamp out a nascent opium poppy industry in Peru continue to focus on intelligence gathering to establish the whereabouts and parameters of cultivation. The police have eradicated 38.5 hectares of opium poppy this year. The 1-800 hotline initiated in February has begun to yield results with several seizures of opium poppy fields in April from a hotline tip. Mission counter-narcotics resources will continue to be directed primarily at illegal coca and cocaine trafficking while continuing to keep a close watch on the potential growth of opium poppy in Peru (Reftel).

POLICE DESTROY 110 COCAINE-BASE LABS IN VRAE

¶6. (U) During April, DIRANDRO Special Operations (GOES) troops destroyed 110 cocaine-base laboratories and tons of precursor chemicals and coca leaf in the Apurimac/Ene Valley (VRAE). On April 17, GOES destroyed a major cocaine HCl laboratory and seized 220 kg of cocaine base, 560 gallons of acetone, 80 gallons of ammonia, four weapons, and communications equipment. On April 27, they seized 153 kg of cocaine base from a house in the area. Interdiction and eradication operations continue in the Upper Huallaga. A second GOES team fielded more than 200 police in support of eradication operations. This team has destroyed 70 cocaine-base laboratories this year.

NEW PILOTS TRAINED AND PNP PROVIDING SECOND MI-17

¶7. (SBU) Nine new PNP pilots finished training on the UH-2s this month. In anticipation of increasing interdiction operations in the VRAE, NAS is intensifying special missions training such as fast roping, rappelling, sling loads, and use of night-vision goggles. Presently, NAS has 19 UH-2s in country. NAS signed an agreement with DIRAVPOL to make available a second, heavy-lift MI-17 helicopter to support eradication and interdiction operations. The remanufactured MI-17 has been promised for the end of June. The Peruvian Air Force (FAP) C-26 Joint CN Air Squadron continues to provide valuable airlift support for counternarcotics operations east of the Andes.

PORT SEIZURES INCREASE AND SMUGGLING SCHEME UNCOVERED

¶8. (SBU) On April 14, DEA and the Bahamian Police found a maritime container with 65 kg of cocaine HCl. This seizure was tied to a smuggling ring operating in the Port of Callao. A separate investigation has been initiated to look into three incidents of tampering with shipping container seals. During April the Manifest Review Unit (MRU) sent 3 alerts of suspect cargo to DEA, 8 alerts to the port of Paita, 18 to the port of Callao, and 4 to U.S. Customs and Border Protection in the U.S. The suspect cargo will be searched for cocaine at the receiving port.

¶9. (SBU) Peruvian Customs and the Police arrested 40 people attempting to smuggle 100 kg of cocaine HCl last month

through the Jorge Chavez International Airport in Lima. Law enforcement officers detected the drugs with a NAS-provided ion-scanner. The newly-trained Peruvian Customs canines at Lima airport have found 52 kg of cocaine HCl in seven seizures. Inspectors at SERPOST (Peruvian postal system) seized 50 kg of cocaine HCl in 15 cases this month.

¶110. (SBU) A mobile x-ray van arrived in Lima and will be made available to Peruvian Customs and DIRANDRO starting in May. Recently, the GOP officials impounded 25,000 cans of asparagus suspected of containing at least 1,500 kg of cocaine HCl. NAS Advisors will use the 25,000 cans to train Peruvian officials to use the x-ray van.

CREATING NEW WAYS TO HELP ANTI-DRUG COALITIONS

¶111. (U) The ongoing evaluation of the community anti-drug coalitions (CAC) revealed that some CAC teams (NGOs) are still blending the CAC methodology with past program models that focus on individuals. Coalitions focus on communities. NAS is preparing additional material to guide the CAC teams, based on the information presented at the CADCA-sponsored two-day training in Charleston, SC, April 20-21. The materials will emphasize that CAC teams encourage community members to participate in every aspect of prevention activities.

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